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THE WISTERIA TREES

An American Play by JOSHUA LOGAN

BASED ON ANTON CHEKHOV'S *THE CHERRY ORCHARD*

50-8570

The Wisteria Trees

RANDOM HOUSE · NEW YORK

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FIRST PRINTING

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MANUFACTURED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

QB

To Colonel Howard Frank Noble, USA,

My Yankee stepfather
who made me see the trees

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of my mother, Sue Nabors Noble, who recalled many Louisiana details to me and supplied many others; Merrill Moore, who gave me the idea of Peety and his jingles; my father's sister, Mrs. William Archibald, who introduced me to Froggie and Miss Mouse; and Amy Lane, Aunt Mary Ann and Uncle Scott, who brought me up.

THE WISTERIA TREES *was first presented by Leland Hayward and Joshua Logan at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York City, on March 29, 1950, with the following cast:*

(IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

DOLLY MAY	Vinie Burrows
MARTHA	Peggy Conklin
HENRY ARTHUR HENRY	Maurice Ellis
YANCY LOPER	Kent Smith
SCOTT	Alonzo Bosan
LUCY ANDREE RANSDELL	Helen Hayes
ANTOINETTE	Bethel Leslie
CASSIE	Georgia Burke
GAVIN LEON ANDREE	Walter Abel
BOWMAN WITHERSPOON	G. Albert Smith
JACQUES	Ossie Davis
PETER WHITFIELD	Douglas Watson
SOLO SINGER	Maude Simmons

CHILDREN: Irene Treadwell, Ralph Robertson, Jr., and Patsy Carol.

GUESTS AT PARTY: Mary Vallee, Ellen Cobb Hill, Kitty Snapper, Patricia deCoursey, Elisa Toca and Bentley Wallace.

OTHER SERVANTS: Emory S. Richardson, Reri Grist and Duke Williams.

Directed by Joshua Logan

Setting and Lighting by Jo Mielziner

Costumes by Lucinda Ballard

Musical Arrangements by Lehman Engel

SCENE

The children's parlor, with windows opening on part of the outside gallery of Wisteria Plantation, Louisiana

Act One. Spring.

Act Two.
Scene I. Summer.
Scene II. Autumn.

Act Three. Winter.

Time: The end of the last century.

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

The children's parlor and part of the gallery surrounding the big house, on Wisteria Plantation.

It is at first glance a room that has been lived in for generations. The furniture and the decorations have been changed and added to many times. It is an elegant room but shows signs of disrepair. Elaborately carved moldings are still evident. There is a crystal chandelier. The ceilings are tall, the wallpaper is old.

There are also many reminders of the children who have lived in this room—an elaborately carved child's piano, several children's chairs, a children's table, and some old toys. On a shelf are two stuffed animals made of felt; they are pretty bedraggled now. One is a frog; he wears a frock coat and a small sword and pistol are attached to his belt. The other is a mouse who wears a white satin dress and a bridal veil.

In the upstage wall there are two very tall French windows with jalousies or two-battened blinds. Above them is a fan-shaped West Indian blind. There is also one of these windows in the right wall through which the sun is seen to rise during the first act.

There is an archway in the upper left wall which leads to the hall and the rest of the house. In the hall are two more French windows opening onto the gallery.

When the blinds are open, the long gallery which surrounds the house can be seen, with part of the tall, fluted columns that surround the house and the banisters between them. Above the banisters are the wisteria vines with their thick, tortuous trunks and silver bark. Beyond the vines, which practically

screen out any view of the outside, can be seen the purple flowers in spring, the heavy leaves in summer, the thinned-out leaves of autumn and the bare, web-like sprigs of winter.

When the curtain goes up it is dark, before dawn, in the month of April. A faint light reveals the room and then from the hall the light of a lamp carried by someone approaching can be seen. A Negro woman can be heard singing:

> *Oh, dere's fo' and twenty elders on deir knee-ees,*
> *Oh, dere's fo' and twenty elders on deir knee-ees.*
> *They all rise together and face the risin' sun,*
> *Singing, "Lord, have mercy . . . if you plee-eese."*

A train whistle is heard not too far off.

DOLLY MAY, *a young Negro girl, enters. She is carrying a lamp, which gives the room more light. Now we can see that there are rain stains on the wallpaper of the walls and of the ceiling. The wisteria vine has grown across the gallery and entered the room and broken part of the fan-shaped blind above one of the windows.*

DOLLY MAY

(*Imitating the whistle*)

Whooo-whooo . . . (*She calls offstage*) Miss Martha, that's the train.

(MARTHA *enters, also carrying a lamp. She is about twenty-five and pretty, and dressed very plainly.*)

MARTHA

We'll be hearin' the carriages soon, Dolly May. Turn up that light, will you please? We've just got to make this room look more cheerful. Oh, my goodness!

DOLLY MAY

What's the matter, Miss Martha?

MARTHA

Some more plaster's come off! The rain's been in here again. Better turn the light down a little bit. No—leave it up. She might as well face facts. (*She calls offstage*) Henry Arthur Henry! Bring some more wood in the children's parlor!

HENRY ARTHUR

(*Offstage*)

All right, Miss Martha.

MARTHA

Cousin Lucy's sure to come in here first. Everybody loves this room. I wonder why. . . .

DOLLY MAY

(*Looking around in admiration*)

It's the messiest.

MARTHA

It certainly is the messiest. Oh, I do want her to have a pretty homecoming, after all the ugliness she's been through.

DOLLY MAY

I know the person you're talkin' about.

MARTHA

Dolly May!

DOLLY MAY

Everybody know about Miss Lucy in Paris.

MARTHA

I was talkin' about *before* she went to Paris. Dolly May, how old were you when Miss Lucy went away?

DOLLY MAY

Thirteen.

MARTHA

You remember what a lovely person she was, don't you?

DOLLY MAY

Yes, ma'am.

MARTHA

Well, she still is, Dolly May, and all of us here in her house are part of her family and we all love her, don't we?

DOLLY MAY

Yes, ma'am.

MARTHA

And we don't talk about people we love, do we?

DOLLY MAY

No, ma'am.

MARTHA

Now, turn up that lamp, will you please?

DOLLY MAY

Yes, ma'am.

(HENRY ARTHUR HENRY *enters. He is about thirty years old and is the Negro man-of-all-work about the house. He carries a bunch of flowers and an armful of wood.*)

HENRY ARTHUR

Dolly May, these daffodils is to be laid on the breakfast table at random-like. (*He puts the flowers on the table but they fall to the floor; in reaching for them he drops the wood*) Did you see that accident happen to me?

DOLLY MAY

Miss Martha, this is why we call him Mister Misery.
(*She picks up the flowers and exits.*)

HENRY ARTHUR

(*Putting wood in the fireplace*)
And every day it's somethin' else. It's chilly out there. Brrr. Our climate does not rise to the occasion, does it, Miss Martha?

MARTHA

Rise to the occasion! (*She listens*) I hear a horse!

DOLLY MAY

(*Entering*)
Miss Martha! Mista Yancy Loper's comin'! (MARTHA *walks away*) Don't you want to see your fiancé?

MARTHA

What are you talkin' about?

DOLLY MAY

Ain't you and Mista Yancy engaged to be married?

MARTHA

Of course not. What makes you say a thing like that?

DOLLY MAY

Everybody says you all is ideal mates! He's rich and you're poor. It's ideal!

MARTHA

Stop bein' silly.

HENRY ARTHUR

That's right, Dolly May—it's just like you and me.

DOLLY MAY

Only you ain't rich. You're just Mister Misery.

LOPER'S VOICE

Where is everybody?

DOLLY MAY

In here, Mista Yancy!

(YANCY LOPER *enters. He is about forty years old. His face and neck are very sunburned. He is dressed in expensive clothes but he does not wear them well. His shoes are perhaps too yellow, his vest too loud, and his tie is completely wrong.*)

LOPER

Hello, Dolly May . . . Miss Martha.

MARTHA

Mister Loper.

LOPER

I expected you all to be havin' a comin'-home party.

DOLLY MAY

Train was late.

LOPER

Why, it's four o'clock in the mornin'. (*He looks at* MARTHA. *She turns away shyly*) Oh, Henry Arthur Henry, water my horse, will you?

HENRY ARTHUR

Yes, sir. . . . (*Starting out, he trips over a chair*) Yes, sir. That's the third time, today.

(*He exits.* LOPER *turns back to* MARTHA, *who does not look directly at him.*)

LOPER

The old gray mare, she ain't what she used to be . . . only it's the old black mare.

MARTHA

I know.

LOPER

(*Embarrassed*)

This old place ain't what it used to be, either.

MARTHA

It's clean.

LOPER

Oh, I didn't mean nothin' against your housekeepin', Miss Martha.

MARTHA

I'll get you some coffee, Mister Loper.

DOLLY MAY

I'll get it!

MARTHA

I'll get Mister Loper's coffee.

(*She exits.*)

DOLLY MAY

She could use a rich husband, Mista Yancy. (LOPER *crosses to the window and looks out*) What are you lookin' at?

LOPER

That poor little plantation store. Dolly May—one day before you was born Miss Lucy was over there buyin' candy from us. My daddy threw an empty corn-whiskey bottle at me and smashed me in the face—give me a nose bleed. Miss Lucy dragged me in here . . . right here . . . used to be a wash-

stand there . . . and she bathed my face with rose water. "Don't cry, little poor one," she said, "you're gonna live."

DOLLY MAY

Little poor one? You don't seem like po' white trash to me, Mista Yancy.

LOPER

What do I seem like? Rich white trash?

DOLLY MAY

No . . . I just meant that you're so nice that I thought you must be . . .

LOPER

Listen! Horses *and* carriage wheels!

DOLLY MAY

Come on, Mista Yancy!

(*She exits quickly, followed by* LOPER. *Just before he exits, he stops to adjust his tie and smooth his hair.*)

(*The stage is empty. Two carriages are heard coming toward the house, screams of greeting from the other side of the house, then the noise of excited voices approaching the room.*)

(SCOTT, *an old Negro man in a coachman's coat, enters and crosses as quickly as he can manage, looking back over his shoulder once or twice. He exits, closing the door behind him. He carries a carriage whip.*)

(MARTHA *and* ANTOINETTE *enter.* ANTOINETTE *is about seventeen and very beautiful.* CASSIE *follows them. She is the Negro nurse. Over her bandanna she wears a huge Paris hat, and she is carrying a raffia bag and various packages.*)

ANTOINETTE

—And Mama brought some pretty clothes for you, Martha—look at Cassie's Paris hat!

MARTHA

Lovely, Cassie! Suits you!

ANTOINETTE

Mama still has no idea what money means! Oh, Mama's little piano! Mama, come see the children's parlor! Cassie, we're home!

CASSIE

Yes, baby!

ANTOINETTE

(*Calling offstage again*)

Mama! Children's parlor!

LUCY

(*Offstage*)

I'm comin'! I'm just takin' it all in!

(LUCY ANDREE RANSDELL *enters. She is dressed in a smart traveling costume. She is elated by her return but deeply moved by various familiar objects in the room.*)

ANTOINETTE

(*Pointing to the piano*)

Mama . . . look.

LUCY

(*She crosses to it, sits, plays a simple child's scale. Then she leans on the piano*)

Back where I started. Oh, my gracious me! (*She sits up*) Gay! (*She rises*) Come on in here . . . I need support.

ANTOINETTE

(*Calling offstage*)

Uncle Gay!

LUCY

(*Crossing to* MARTHA)

Little ol' Cousin Martha!

(*She hugs* MARTHA. GAVIN LEON ANDREE *enters. He is about fifty-two and well-tailored*)

Oh, Gay, my big brother!

(*They embrace*)

Look where we are!

(BOWMAN WITHERSPOON *has entered. He is a florid man in his sixties.* LOPER *stands in the doorway.* SCOTT *comes back, pushing a shy little Negro girl who has a bouquet of flowers and a palmetto fan. She holds them out to* LUCY.)

GAVIN

Sister, look who's come to greet you.

LUCY

(*To the little girl*)

What's your name?

LITTLE GIRL

Miss Lucy!

LUCY

No, Honey, that's *my* name! What's *your* name?

LITTLE GIRL

Miss Lucy! I'se your namesake!

LUCY

You tell your mother that Miss Lucy wishes she had as good manners as her namesake.

LITTLE GIRL

(*Laughing*)

All right.

LUCY

Cassie, give me that box of chocolates. (CASSIE *hands* LUCY *the box.* LUCY *gives it to the child*) With love from Miss Lucy to Miss Lucy. (*The child runs out happily*) Oh, Gay, that dark mornin' Santa Claus left your little red leather chair! Were you ever small enough to fit in it? And my little Lee used to sit in that chair and pretend he was running the plantation. Oh, this room . . . this room.

MARTHA

Some plaster's come off, Cousin Lucy. The roof's been leaking.

LUCY

Oh, yes . . . lovely . . . lovely.

(*She turns to* GAVIN)

Gay! Whatever happened to that white satin suit Mama made for you when you were six years old, so you could go to Mardi Gras as the Young Prince—and you wouldn't wear it 'cause that little Negro boy laughed at you so! (*She quotes the little boy*)

Miss Nancy, Miss Nancy
His pants is awful fancy!

(*She points at* GAVIN *and laughs*)

Whatever happened to that suit?

GAVIN

Scott and I cut it into small pieces and burned it in the back yard.

LUCY

Oh, Gay—my brother, my dreamer! (*She kisses him*) You've been holding up the roof all by yourself, haven't you? Forgive me, darling . . . forgive me. (*She turns and sees* WITHERSPOON) And Bowman Witherspoon, you old Methodist!

WITHERSPOON

Baptist!

LUCY

What's the difference? How's your plantation doing?

WITHERSPOON

We've had a bad year.

LUCY

I've had five of those. (*She turns to* MARTHA) You're just as young as the day you walked into this house— (*Turning to* GAVIN) —almost apologizing because her parents had died!

ANTOINETTE

(*She has taken two stuffed animals from a shelf, holding one herself and handing the other to* WITHERSPOON)

Mama . . . look!

LUCY

(*Turns and sees the animals*)

Oh, Froggie and Miss Mouse!

ANTOINETTE

(*Singing*)

Froggie went a-courtin'—

MARTHA

—he did ride.

EVERYONE

Um-hm.

ANTOINETTE

Sword and a pistol by his side.

LUCY

Said, "Miss Mouse, will you be my bride?"

EVERYONE

Um-hm.

LUCY

We made Mama sing that song all day long.

ANTOINETTE

And I made you sing it all day long, and little Lee never let you stop.

LUCY

Never let me stop . . . Mister Frog, you belong to the ages! (*She sees* LOPER *in the doorway*) Who's that? Who's that standin' over there?

LOPER

(*Moves forward, smiling*)

Hello, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

I remember who you are 'cause you're blushing. You're Yancy Loper! You may own half of Louisiana now, but you'll always be that same sweet little boy who used to sell us jelly beans and corn candy—and blushed with every scoopful. And Antoinette tells me that there's a lot of talk about you and our darling Cousin Martha. I do hope there's something to it. (*She looks around during the embarrassed silence*) Have I said something wrong?

LOPER

I see you still like violets.

LUCY

I love all forms of purple. It must be the wisteria in my blood. Oh, I can't wait for the sun to come up so I can see them. Are they beautiful this year—the trees?

GAVIN

Perfection!

LUCY

These trees are as famous in France now as they are in Louisiana! I described them to everybody. And I used to find myself cryin' every year in April and wonder why—and then realized it was wisteria time. Oh, my goodness, it's happening again.

MARTHA

Ready for some breakfast?

LUCY

Martha, what a practical idea . . . so much better than cryin', isn't it? Oh, wait a minute, everybody—I have an announcement to make. I *knew* Dolly May! (DOLLY MAY *giggles*) How's your mother?

DOLLY MAY

Just fine!

LUCY

That's good. How's her rheumatism?

DOLLY MAY

Oh, she still got the rheumatism.

LUCY

(*As she and* DOLLY MAY *exit*)

Oh, she'd never get rid of that rheumatism—you watch! She's very fond of that rheumatism!

(LOPER *follows them.*)

WITHERSPOON

Cassie, what did you think of Paris?

CASSIE

Oh, it got a lot of parks, but they all too laid out for me. And there's marble statues of nekkid men all over the place—most of 'em's called Apollo! Miss Lucy says, "Isn't they beautiful statues, Cassie?" (*To* ANTOINETTE) Didn't she? (ANTOINETTE *nods*) And I says, "Miss Lucy, I dressed and undressed your little son Lee before he got drowned in the river, and afore that I dressed your little boy cousins—all ages! Honey, these here Apollos ain't no recreation for me!"

WITHERSPOON

(*Laughing*)

Well, come on! Let's get some grits and gravy!

(*He exits.* ANTOINETTE *follows him to the door, looks to see that he disappears, motions the others to remain.*)

ANTOINETTE

Wait a minute. Cassie, you watch. Martha—Uncle Gay—you've got to know something. I didn't tell Mama about the plantation. She doesn't know!

MARTHA

You mean to say you and Cassie traveled seven thousand miles and you never told her what might happen?

CASSIE

Miss Lucy wasn't in no condition to hear bad news.

MARTHA

Then why'd she come home?

CASSIE

To get away from *him!*

GAVIN

Cassie! Antoinette, go into the dinin' room!

ANTOINETTE

Oh, Uncle Gay, I'm seventeen years old and I've known about this since I was twelve. Jacques has been telling Cassie about it all the way back.

GAVIN

Jacques?

CASSIE

That spoiled little black boy.

ANTOINETTE

Mama took him over there to fetch for her and he had the French people fetchin' for him. The French people think Negroes are—exotic.

MARTHA

They don't!

ANTOINETTE

Yes, they do! Don't they, Cassie?

CASSIE

They sho' do! They was tippin' their hats to me all over the place!

GAVIN

I thought at least she was happy.

ANTOINETTE

Uncle Gay, when I walked into Mama's hotel room, I think she was noticin' me for the first time in her life. I was in pigtails when she left. She threw her arms around me and her little face seemed terribly strained and she said, "Oh, my little girl, thank God you've come. Take me home—take me back to Louisiana."

MARTHA

Then she's not going to hear about this auction. Uncle Gay, what are you going to do?

GAVIN

Now? I'm going to see to it that Lucy eats some grits and gravy. Otherwise she'll just take coffee.

(*He exits.*)

ANTOINETTE

Has he collected this month's rent from the tenants?

MARTHA

Uncle Gay? He can't ask a Negro for money. They're *all* his friends.

(LOPER *enters, with a plate and fork. They look at him.*)

LOPER

Oh! Excuse me. I'm in the wrong pasture.

(*He exits.*)

ANTOINETTE

Has Yancy asked you yet?

MARTHA

No . . . and now it's nearly two years since people started sayin' we were right for each other and . . . Oh, go to bed, darling, and stop talking about my mythical marriage.

ANTOINETTE

I'm sorry.

(*She exits.* CASSIE *crosses to* MARTHA *and puts arm around her.*)

CASSIE

Miss Martha, why don't you sneak up on Mister Yancy some day and look him straight in the eye— (MARTHA *looks at her*) —and give him a nice, big smile. You only looks at him sideways, honey . . . and he can't tell what pretty eyes you got.

(*She exits.* MARTHA *turns to mirror over mantelpiece, holds herself erect and smiles at her reflection, then suddenly drops her face into her hands and turns away, then looks up.*)

MARTHA

Oh, God, take care of Antoinette and everybody and let Cousin Lucy keep this place—and let me be able . . . to look him in the eye.

(DOLLY MAY *enters from left with coffee tray which she puts on console. When* MARTHA *hears her she hurriedly picks up things* LUCY *left behind on table and acts very busy.* DOLLY MAY *goes to desk, picks up cup and saucer, and* JACQUES *enters from left carrying leather hatbox and umbrella and wearing hat and gloves.* MARTHA *turns up, sees* JACQUES *and stops.* JACQUES *sweeps off his hat and bows to* MARTHA)

Jacques!

(*She exits.* DOLLY MAY *looks at* JACQUES. *He sweeps his*

hat off grandly and bows very low to her. Then he speaks in French.)

JACQUES

C'est possible de passer pas ici, s'il vous plaît?

DOLLY MAY

(*Smiling nervously*)

Why, I barely know'd you, Jock! You sure has changed in Paris, France!

JACQUES

(*Looking at her leisurely*)

Who . . . êtes vous?

DOLLY MAY

What's that? Oh, that's French, ain't it? When you went away I wasn't no bigger'n— (*She shows how small she was*) I'se Dolly May! Uncle Virgil's granddaughter! 'Member that old warehouse with the cotton bales?

JACQUES

(*Remembering with pleasure*)

Mmmmmmmm! (*He crosses, removing his glove. He extends his hand, as does* DOLLY MAY. *Instead of shaking her hand, he kisses it. Before she recovers from this, he folds her into his arms*) Oo la la! (*As he kisses her, she drops the cup and saucer. He picks up his bags and umbrella and rushes out by her*) A toute à l'heure!

DOLLY MAY

What?

JACQUES

See you later!

(*He exits.* MARTHA *rushes in.*)

MARTHA

What's the matter?

DOLLY MAY

Somethin' broke!

MARTHA

Well, that's good luck.

(*They pick up the pieces. Enter* SCOTT.)

SCOTT

De missus wants her coffee in here. Is it black enough? Whar's de milk, shiff-less?

DOLLY MAY

(*Running out*)

Good Lawd!

SCOTT

You gettin' worse and worse!

(*He laughs.*)

MARTHA

What's got you so tickled, Uncle Scott?

SCOTT

I foxed everybody. I done live to see it happen. To tell you the truth, Miss Martha, I done charmed Miss Lucy back home. I been wearin' a frog's left hind foot around my neck. Now don't you tell her how she got back. Shhhh . . .

(LUCY *and* GAVIN *enter from left.*)

LUCY

Recover the billiard table, paint the dinin' room white, like Mama had it, including the floor. It may be impractical but it's pretty. New curtains in here. Why, look at that plaster. Oh, we've got lots to do.

SCOTT

(*To* GAY)

You done put on the wrong trousers again. What am I gonna do with you?

GAVIN

Go to bed!

SCOTT

Who you talkin' to?

MARTHA

Sh! Antoinette's asleep. Scott, open the windows, will you? The sun's come up. It's not so cold. (*They open the windows. The wisteria can be seen in full bloom.* GAVIN *whistles a phrase of "Lavender's Blue"*) Look, Cousin Lucy—smell the air.

GAVIN

The wisteria's at its height. There's not a breath of wind.

LUCY

Oh, Gay!

(LOPER *and* WITHERSPOON *enter.*)

LOPER

Miss Lucy, can I come in?

LUCY

Why, yes, Yancy.

LOPER

I got to be on my way. Dawgonnit, I sure hate to leave.

LUCY

Well, it was a real treat to see you, Yancy.

LOPER

Oh, I'm not going 'til it's all settled.

LUCY

Settled?

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I've gone to a lot of trouble for your family. Even though your brother here stands in front of the post office every Sunday mornin' havin' his shoes shined and talkin'. Seems he don't approve of a turkeyneck havin' bought up land 'round here. Seems he talks about me like I wasn't even dirt.

(SCOTT *enters with coffee tray.*)

LUCY

Where's my coffee? Thank you, Scott. Thank you, my sweet old rock of Gibraltar. I'm so glad you're still alive.

SCOTT

Day before yesterday.

LUCY

(*To* GAVIN)

What?

GAVIN

He doesn't hear well.

LUCY

Oh. (*To* SCOTT) Day before yesterday.

SCOTT

Dat's right.

LUCY

(*Turning to* MARTHA)

I wonder what we're talkin' about.

LOPER

Miss Lucy, you did something for me once. Now you're in trouble and I'm going to do something for you.

LUCY

My troubles are over, Yancy. I'm back in this house.

(SCOTT *places a taboret for* LUCY'S *coffee cup. She pats his arm.*)

SCOTT

Day before yesterday.

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I figured out a way to keep this place from going up for auction.

LUCY

What?

GAVIN

(*Throwing his dice*)

Box cars.

LUCY

Put those dice away, Gay. What, Yancy?

LOPER

Now it isn't scheduled 'til the twenty-second of September, so we got plenty of time if we work fast.

LUCY

Auction? Oh, Yancy, people have been talking about auctions and foreclosures ever since I was a little girl. I've always found that Mama had the best plan for them. Ignore them!

LOPER

But, Miss Lucy, you can't ignore the facts.

LUCY

Oh, yes, you can, Yancy, if you put your mind to it. (*A more important thought occurs to her. She rises suddenly and crosses to* GAVIN) Gay! You never wrote me about our old Mary Ann's funeral. Was she in the main parlor?

GAVIN

Yes, ma'am. White satin dress and all.

LUCY

Did they take her bandanna off?

GAVIN

Yes.

LUCY

What color was her hair?

GAVIN

White . . . snow white.

LUCY

Oh, she must have been beautiful. God bless the old soft-hearted tyrant.

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I can't let you go on like this. Unless you do something about it, you're gonna lose this place.

LUCY

Well, then we'll do something about it, Yancy. We'll take out another mortgage or sell some more cotton land.

GAVIN

Cotton land's all gone.

LUCY

It is? Then we'll have to do something else. (*She picks up a domino from the table, holds it for* GAVIN *to see*) These are your old dominoes!

GAVIN

Mm-hm.

LOPER

I've gone into this very carefully and there's only one thing left you can do, and I'd do it if I was in your place.

LUCY

What's that, Yancy?

LOPER

You see, this old park don't have to stay the way it is. It could be cut up for strawberry patches and truck farms and leased out. Now . . . get some truck farmers to pay you a year's rent in advance, give that money to the bank—and you're in business.

LUCY

Where would these little truck farms be, Yancy?

LOPER

Right here—right here in the park.

LUCY

But there's not enough room for them.

LOPER

Naturally, we'll have to tear down some of these old buildings . . .

LUCY

What?

LOPER

The carriage house and the old slave quarters—they ain't bein' used for anything important. But before that, you got to clear out the whole park—cut down all this damn wisteria!

GAVIN

Are you out of your mind, sir?

LUCY

Yancy! Oh, Yancy—I should have thought that you of all people would understand about this place. You were always so sensitive, and you were brought up here. Yancy, listen—this park was part of a grant to our family from the King of France. That's Louisiana history! My grandfather planted the live oaks himself—one thousand of them—and my grandmother followed behind him with the gardeners and their wheelbarrows and planted a little wisteria vine beside each one of them. It's all in the archives in New Orleans. This park is a masterpiece! You wouldn't want us to destroy it just to make a living, would you? Oh, no, Yancy—it's impossible!

LOPER

It's not impossible, Miss Lucy. It's gotta be done. Don't you want to eat?

GAVIN

Mister Loper, speaking for my sister Lucy and myself as head of the Andree family, we would rather starve than cut down these trees.

LOPER

Trees! Stop callin' 'em trees! They're just old vines that climbed up around young live oaks and choked 'em to death.

They couldn't stand up for themselves if they didn't have those live oaks inside of them. Last year one of them grew right through the side of the carriage house, and now one's wrapped itself around one of your famous Corinthian columns like a bo' constrictor and squashed it—so stop callin' 'em trees! Stop treatin' 'em with respect! They certainly ain't treatin' you with any! (*He walks to the window, very upset*) Are they wrappin' themselves around your brains? (*Then more gently*) Look, Miss Lucy, you get rested up. We'll talk about it later. But you better think it over or on the twenty-second of September this particular part of Louisiana's history is gonna vamoose. (*He looks around at all of them*) Miss Martha. (*He exits.*)

LUCY

He's very nice, Martha. He just got upset, that's all.

GAVIN

Lucy . . . Bowman's asleep.

LUCY

Bowman!

WITHERSPOON

(*Waking immediately*)

Yes, Lucy?

LUCY

You were asleep.

WITHERSPOON

Yes, I guess I was. I'm not used to stayin' up all night. Lucy, would you lend me two hundred and forty dollars? I gotta pay the interest on my mortgage tomorrow.

GAVIN

Go back to sleep, Bowman.

MARTHA

Mister Bowman, didn't you hear what Mister Loper just said? We haven't got enough money to keep this place from goin' up for auction.

WITHERSPOON

Auction! Don't let people get you worried. (*He gets his hat*) Here I was thinkin' only the other day I'd lost everything I had—and what happened? The railroad has to go through my land—and I have to get paid for it. That's the law! I don't know what people worry about.

(*He wanders off.*)

LUCY

Bowman's right. No matter what happens we mustn't let ourselves worry.

GAVIN

No!

SCOTT

Long time ago dey used to dry dese 'steria flowers. Made 'em into sachets and perfume water.

GAVIN

Be quiet!

SCOTT

Dey made a lot of money, too. Dey had a recipe.

LUCY

Where's that recipe now, Scott?

SCOTT

Dey forgit it.

LUCY

Oh. (SCOTT *exits.* LUCY *looks around the room for a moment.* GAVIN *stands at window looking off at the wisteria.* MARTHA

goes out into the gallery) What innocent years I spent in this room. (*She laughs happily*) When I woke up in my little bed, something else woke up alongside me. (*She notices* GAVIN *turn and look at her*) Not you, Gay! A kind of childish expectancy. We used to jump out of bed together, my excitement and I, and we'd run on our little bare feet to this old window and look at all those blossoms—miles of them, tumbling all over themselves, yet not moving at all. My same lavender ocean, frozen absolutely still. After all those clammy, muddy nights of winter, you are young again, my old trees, and clean. Oh, why can't I be clean again . . . immaculate as you are now? Oh, God, why can't that be?

GAVIN

Lucy.

LUCY

If you look long enough, they put a spell on you, don't they?

(MARTHA *sees someone approaching along the gallery from left.*)

MARTHA

Here's Peety. Came in last night.

(*Enter* PETER WHITFIELD. *He is lean, athletic, his hair a little too long, his clothes a little shabby. There is an intensity about him.*)

PETER

Miss Lucy. (*She turns and looks at him blankly*) I'll go away quickly. May I see you? (*He comes toward her tentatively. She still looks at him.*)

MARTHA

It's Peter Whitfield. Rode all the way from Memphis under a freight car, especially to see you.

PETER

Peety . . . from Tulane. (*He smiles and speaks quietly*) Student from impoverished family will tutor child for board and lodging. Specialties—horseback riding, boxing, swimming . . . (*Then in a brighter voice*) I haven't changed that much, have I?

(LUCY *suddenly rushes to* PETER, *embraces him and weeps silently.*)

GAVIN

Behave yourself, will you, Lucy?

MARTHA

I told Peety to wait 'til tomorrow.

LUCY

Oh, Peety, you made my son into a little god. He could run like a young horse, and you taught him to swim before he was six years old. How could it happen?

MARTHA

It was God's will, Cousin Lucy.

LUCY

Martha, stop sayin' that! It cuts me in two! That means God did it to me!

PETER

He did not. The current was too strong for him. We saw it happen, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

And I blamed you. (*She regains her composure*) Why have you grown so thin, Peety?

PETER

It's these clothes. I found them hanging out in the garçonnière. (*Pointing to his shirt*) Mister Gay's shirt!

LUCY

Did you ever make enough money to graduate?

PETER

Not quite.

LUCY

But, Peety, you should have been a very successful tutor.

PETER

Not down here.

LUCY

What was always fighting inside of you? Do you still make up those wonderful jingles at the dinner table? They were awful, too! The things you said about the South!

(*She quotes*)

Alas for the South
She always was poo-er
And never was much
For literatoo-er.

(*They all laugh*)

Peety, are you still writing your serious poetry?

PETER

I'm trying to. I'm publishing a small magazine of new verse forms.

(*He hands her a copy of the magazine.*)

LUCY

(*To* GAVIN)

Peety's a publisher! (*Looking at the magazine*) "Creole." That's a pretty name. What's this black smudge on it?

PETER

(*He takes the magazine, looks at it, and then wipes it on his coat*)

That's axle grease. (*They look at him*) From my lower berth. Look inside.

LUCY

(*She looks inside*)

Peety! How sweet of you!

(*She reads*)

"To Lucy Andree Ransdell, who gives to the old South one reason for existing." That's very nice, Peety—isn't it?

(*She turns the page and reads*)

"The Southern Gentleman . . . May His Tribe Decrease."

(*She gulps and turns the page and reads once more*)

I question white supremacy
I ask who makes these rules
Are they made in Sunday schools
Where children learn that it's a sin
To smoke tobacco and drink gin
But it's all right if you are white
To make the black step off the walk
And sit in back—

(*She stops reading*)

And it's in print! Louisiana certainly has changed since I've been away. How often does this come out, Peety?

PETER

It's come out once.

LUCY

Oh. What does your grandfather think of it?

PETER

I haven't seen him since it came out . . . a year ago last January.

LUCY

Why not?

PETER

He doesn't want to see me any more.

LUCY

Well, Peety, we've found out something. Your grandfather *is* as pompous as he looks.

MARTHA

Cousin Lucy, I forgot . . . two telegrams came for you.

GAVIN

Let's all go upstairs and go to sleep.

LUCY

Are they . . . cablegrams?

MARTHA

(*Handing them to* LUCY)

Cablegrams.

(LUCY *takes them, starts toward table, and sees* PETER, *who moves out of her way. She suddenly tears them and throws the pieces on the floor.*)

LUCY

Yes . . . let's all go to sleep. (*She turns to* PETER) Peety, where do you live?

PETER

Nowhere. I was wondering if you'd let me stay here for a while.

LUCY

Of course. I need a place to live, too. Peety. We all do. (*She starts off, stopping to touch* GAVIN's *cheek as she passes him*) You've grown thinner, too, Gay.

(*She exits.*)

PETER

(*Taking off his coat*)

I've got a home . . . and I'm goin' for a swim. Come on down to the river, Mister Gay.

(*He exits onto the gallery.*)

GAVIN

Brrr . . .

MARTHA

Now, Uncle Gay, what are you going to do?

GAVIN

Martha, according to Hippocrates, if a great many remedies are prescribed for an illness, that illness is incurable. I wish I could stop thinking of remedies.

MARTHA

Well, what are they?

GAVIN

Number one—Antoinette could marry a rich man.

MARTHA

Uncle Gay, you might just as well wish that the money would fall down from heaven like manna.

GAVIN

Martha . . . what a lovely thought!

MARTHA

Oh, Uncle Gay, you're head of this family. Why can't you collect some rent from the Negroes?

GAVIN

Martha, I rode all around this plantation this very morning and passed the time of day with every Negro on the place.

MARTHA

Did you get any money?

GAVIN

They've had a bad year.

MARTHA

They can talk you out of anything. Ephram hasn't paid you a cent for five years.

GAVIN

Ephram! Martha— (*Taking a bill from his pocket*) —what does this look like? Ten dollars! From Ephram!

MARTHA

Did Ephram give you that?

GAVIN

Not on your life! I won it from him!

MARTHA

Uncle Gay, don't you see—you're easy game! They feed you corn whiskey, start singin' and dancin'—then they pull out the dice and you're gone! One time you were gone for three days!

GAVIN

I certainly was . . . three days. (*He gets businesslike*) There's Aunt Catherine in Charleston. (ANTOINETTE *appears in the door*) She's rich as Croesus—

MARTHA

And she won't give us a cent!

GAVIN

That was Lucy's fault!

ANTOINETTE

Why?

GAVIN

Because Aunt Catherine disapproved of the way your Mama behaved . . . runnin' off with that fella. She disapproved so violently that I was forced to call Aunt Catherine a narrow-minded old fool.

ANTOINETTE

Maybe Yancy's right, Uncle Gay. You do talk too much.

MARTHA

Uncle Gay . . . they say silence is golden.

GAVIN

It is? Well, I'd like to find something that's golden. I'll keep quiet. (*He sits down*) Oh! (*He jumps up immediately*) This mornin' I dropped by the courthouse and while I was doin' some of my famous talkin' too much I found out we can get a loan on a promissory note.

MARTHA

Is it true?

GAVIN

Well, I've got to go down again and talk it over.

MARTHA

Oh, Uncle Gay, don't lead us on!

GAVIN

Now stop all this sniffling! I'm head of this family and I'm gonna take care of this situation. (*To* ANTOINETTE) Your mother's going to have a talk with this polecat, Yancy Loper. (*To* MARTHA) Excuse me, Martha! (*To* ANTOINETTE) This *man,* Yancy Loper. And naturally he's not going to refuse your mother. No man's ever refused your mother. (*To* MARTHA) That's been one of our troubles! (*To* ANTOINETTE) You'll have to excuse that slip of the tongue, too, Honey. And you're going to Charleston to see your dear Aunt Catherine. She likes you at least.

(*Enter* SCOTT.)

MARTHA

Yes, that's true!

SCOTT

(*Very angrily to* GAVIN)

Gavin Leon Andree! Ain't you got no fear of God? When are you going to sleep?

GAVIN

(*He looks at* SCOTT, *then turns to* MARTHA *and* ANTOINETTE)

In that way, we'll be attacking this problem from three directions at the same time. It's practically all wrapped up and delivered.

SCOTT

Gavin Leon Andree!

GAVIN

Go away, Scott! I'll get undressed myself! It won't be the first time. (*He takes out his dice*) Watch this, Scott! (*He stoops and throws the dice on the floor*) What did I tell you? Natural! (SCOTT *just glares at him*) All right, you old heathen! (*He picks up the dice, turns to the girls*) Nightie night.

(*He walks out,* SCOTT *shuffling behind him.*)

ANTOINETTE

(*Yawning*)

Come on, Martha.

(*She waits at the door for* MARTHA. *The sound of a broom sweeping is heard.*)

MARTHA

They're sweeping the gallery already. Come on to bed, darling.

(*She and* ANTOINETTE *go out.*)

(*A Negro voice is heard singing "Fo' and Twenty Elders on Their Knees" from now until the curtain falls—very slowly.*)

(*After a moment,* LUCY *is seen slowly walking along the*

gallery from left. She enters the room through one of the French windows and looks around the room. Then she sees the torn cablegrams on the floor. She hesitates for a moment, but finally crosses to them, kneels down, and begins picking up the pieces tenderly.)

Curtain

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

Scene I

Summer.

The children's parlor again, but now all the windows are open, giving the effect of an out-of-door set. The vines are covered with leaves. It is almost sunset and the late-afternoon sun plays across the stage, highlighting the people who are in its rays. At present they are JACQUES, *who is sitting back comfortably on the sofa, and* DOLLY MAY, *who is lazily dusting.* CASSIE *is sweeping the gallery, watching them with disgust. As the curtain rises we hear* JACQUES *and* DOLLY MAY *singing "Juanita."*

HENRY ARTHUR

(*Entering, singing*)

Soft o'er the fountain gently falls the southern moon,
Far o'er the mountain breaks the day too soon.

DOLLY MAY

(*To* JACQUES)

Miss livin' in France?

JACQUES

Ah, oui!

HENRY ARTHUR

(*He almost upsets a vase of flowers he is carrying while setting it on console*)

I don't speak French but I read sundry books, and I still

can't seem to find out from them which way I tends—whether I tends to go on enduring life and all the accidents it makes happen to me, or jump in the river. I have a hunch that the universe is not co-operatin' with me.

JACQUES

Continuez la chanson.

HENRY ARTHUR

What?

DOLLY MAY

Go on singin'! (*Turning to* JACQUES) Non?

JACQUES

Oui!

HENRY ARTHUR

If anybody in this room is interested, I'm beginnin' to understand why I tends toward the river.

(*He exits.*)

JACQUES

I don't think Mister Misery is quite all there.

DOLLY MAY

Big Jock, I ain't like these cotton pickers, is I? See how nice and soft my hands is? I'se gettin' kinda delicate and ladylike.

JACQUES

Well, don't get too ladylike! (*He senses someone coming*) Who's that? (*He rises, looks offstage*) Oh, Miss Lucy and them. Mister Yancy's back.

DOLLY MAY

Let's go down to the bayou and get in one of them boats.

JACQUES

Maybe this evenin'.

DOLLY MAY

All right. Until ce soir . . .

(*She exits. As voices approach,* JACQUES *begins to dust furniture casually.* LUCY, *in a hat and closing her parasol, enters, followed by* GAVIN *and* LOPER.)

LOPER

(*As he comes in*)

Now, I've been talkin' to a lot of them Texas truck farmers. They're all itchin' to get at this place, and the time is gettin' short.

LUCY

It's just too hot to think! What a terrible cigar!

LOPER

Just one word—that ain't hard to say—yes or no.

GAVIN

Here we've been all the way in town and back, had lunch, and it's still afternoon. That railroad is a convenience! How about a game of Double Canfield, Lucy?

LUCY

Let's just sit. The vines keep this house very cool in summer, you know, Yancy.

(*She looks in her purse.*)

LOPER

Am I just talkin' to thin air?

GAVIN

Who?

LOPER

Good Lord in heaven!

LUCY

(*Looking in her purse*)

Now where did all that money go I had in here yesterday? (*She turns the purse upside down, shakes it out, the money falling on the floor*) Look at me!

(LOPER *stoops to pick it up.* GAVIN *looks vaguely at it.* JACQUES *comes over.*)

JACQUES

That's all right, Mister Yancy. I'll pick it up for you.

LUCY

Thank you, Jacques. There's a hole in there somewhere. That pathetic little restaurant. Why do you talk so much, Gay boy? All those Latin quotations, all about life in the post-bellum South! And to whom? Talkin' to healthy black waiters about decay!

(JACQUES *suppresses a laugh. He has been down on the floor, picking up coins and listening to this.*)

GAVIN

What are you doin' down there—playin' hide-and-seek? (JACQUES *bursts out laughing*) What's so funny?

JACQUES

I . . . I can't help laughin' every time you open your mouth, Mister Gay! Excuse me!

(*He keeps on laughing.*)

GAVIN

Lucy! Either your brother Gavin or this Parisian is gonna have to leave this house!

LUCY

Run along, Jacques! Va t'en! Va t'en! (JACQUES *hands* LUCY *her purse*) Thank you. Now run along and behave yourself.

JACQUES

Yes'm. I didn't mean nothin', Mister Gay. It's just that people like you is still a novelty to me.

(*He exits.*)

LOPER

Ever hear of B. J. Henderson?

LUCY

Henderson?

LOPER

Big Chicago businessman. He's comin' here personally when this plantation goes up for auction.

(GAVIN *slaps his own face.*)

LUCY

Get him?

GAVIN

Um-hm!

LUCY

Well, Mister B. J. Henderson is not going to get this plantation. Tell him about our Aunt Catherine, Gay.

GAVIN

Mrs. Marius Andree Berringer of Charleston, South Carolina, is sendin' us some money.

LOPER

Well, why didn't you say so?

LUCY

Gay asked her for twenty thousand.

LOPER

(*Looks at them for a moment and then almost explodes*)

Excuse me, but you two are the most flibberty-gibberty people I've ever seen in my life. Twenty thousand dollars!

LUCY

Is that too much?

LOPER

Too much? Don't you know how big this plantation is?

LUCY

Well, what do you want us to do, Yancy? Just tell us!

LOPER

I keep tellin' you. You got to cut up this land and lease it. Pronto! Aujourd'hui today, not aujourd'hui tomorrow, like the Cajun says! This auction's so near you can smell it. Now what do you say?

LUCY

Truck farms and measly little strawberry patches! The whole idea is—if you'll excuse the expression, but it's the only word for it—it's just so . . . tacky! There, I've said it.

GAVIN

A painful word but true.

LOPER

Well, I'm either gonna bust out cryin' or foam up in a fit! Mister Gavin Andree, you are a chicken-hearted old ninny!

(*He starts out.*)

LUCY

Wait a minute, Yancy! Maybe we can think of something else. Think, Gay!

LOPER

There's only one thing to think and you won't think it!

(*He starts out again.*)

LUCY

Yancy! I beg and beseech you on bended knee, please don't go! You once said I was the only friend you had in the world. Now prove it by comin' back here and sittin' down. (LOPER *comes back and sits.* LUCY *laughs hysterically*) I had a terrible feeling, the way you were walking out there, that you were goin' to wrap your arm around one of those Corinthian columns and pull it out and the whole house was goin' to crash down and bury us alive! (*She covers her face*) Oh, my God in heaven!

LOPER

Miss Lucy, what puts ideas like that in your head about me?

GAVIN

Let's go down and have a look at Tom Ned's new litter of pups.

LUCY

It's true! Your punishments come before you die.

LOPER

Punishments? (*He laughs*) Why, you never committed a real sin in your life!

(LUCY *looks at him in amazement.* GAVIN *senses hysteria.*)

GAVIN

Let's go, Lucy.

LUCY

I never committed a sin in my . . . Who's bein' chicken-hearted now, Yancy Loper? I'm being punished. Not Gay—me! I've been willful. When it came to gettin' married, I defied everybody. Our blood was runnin' thin so I decided to change it. I married an up-and-coming lawyer, and then found his one ambition was to be lord of a plantation and drink all the whiskey in the world. So . . . I filled his glass 'til it runnethed over. Before he died he used to bring some strange, crude men around for poker. There was an arrogant one that . . . well, after my lawyer husband died, those times I went to New Orleans to see the opera, I didn't see the opera . . .

GAVIN

Lucy, honey, that's all over.

LUCY

Gay, please! Even you'll admit I was punished then, Yancy. While my little son was showin' me how well he could swim, the river swallowed him up in front of my eyes. These trees turned yellow, the river turned black. I flew the coop! I took a boat for Europe, but not too fast for him. He was standin' in my cabin with a big, white smile. "Not so fast, Honey—you need someone to take care of you." God save me, it sounded

good! So I gave him some money and he bought me a villa near a place he knew called . . . Monte Carlo. Then he got sick and I nursed him for three years.

GAVIN

Why didn't you send for me, Lucy?

LUCY

Oh, Gay, darling! The villa was sold to pay for the doctors, and he was well, so we went to Paris—a beautiful city, Yancy, with great, wide boulevards—and the most *exquisite* punishment of all. One morning while I was asleep he unlocked my dresser drawer and took Mama's diamonds—and then he went to live with a lady we'd met. A few days later he came knockin' at my door, but I had a new strength. My daughter was there. I'd almost forgotten I had one. She brought me back home where I thought I'd be safe. And you say I've never committed a sin—that I've never been punished? (*She breaks down. To cover her tears she takes her handkerchief from her purse and realizes that she has a cablegram. She holds it up*) He's sittin' at our little café under the chestnut tree. (*Music can be heard faintly*) He's sick again. He needs me. Do I hear music playin'?

GAVIN

Out back. Our famous plantation symphony orchestra—violin, tin horn, syrup barrel, wash tub . . .

LUCY

Is that still goin'? You know, we ought to give a soirée—with Japanese lanterns! But who is there left around here that we could . . . Would you come to our party, Yancy?

LOPER

(*Deeply moved*)

I don't think so.

LUCY

What do you want—a formal and written invitation?

LOPER

I wouldn't write you back. A lady once said my handwritin' looked like a chicken walked through an ink puddle and then on across the writin' paper. I was brought up just over there, where people don't write so good.

LUCY

You need somebody who could write letters for you. (*She walks over, touches his shoulder*) A woman, Yancy . . . a wife. You could be an important man.

LOPER

I'm real proud you think so.

LUCY

You wouldn't have anything against marrying a member of the Andree family, would you?

LOPER

(*Looking at her incredulously*)

I don't quite know what you're gettin' at, Miss Lucy.

LUCY

Her mother was a cousin of ours. Didn't you know that?

LOPER

Her?

LUCY

Martha!

LOPER

Oh, I think she's a wonderful young lady, Miss Lucy.

GAVIN

You may have to get somebody else to run this plantation, Lucy. That little old Bank of Commerce over there wants me to be vice-president—three thousand dollars a year.

LUCY

Are you sure they don't just want your name in gold letters on the front window?

GAVIN

No, it's a new policy—they want Negro depositors and I've got lots of friends.

(*Enter* SCOTT, *carrying a cape.*)

SCOTT

Marse Gay, put this little cape on. It's gonna get damp.

GAVIN

You're an old black nuisance!

SCOTT

Put this cape on, white chile! (GAVIN *takes the cape*) And this mornin' you went out and you never told me you was goin' out!

GAVIN

Foxed you, didn't I?

LUCY

How old you are, Scott.

SCOTT

(*Not understanding*)

Can I please you, mistis?

LOPER

She says how old are you.

SCOTT

Lord only knows, mistis. They was tryin' to get me mated 'fore your daddy was born. Den I got Marse Gay when he was born. (*To* GAVIN) You tried to run away from me and go to war, but you didn't get far, did you?

GAVIN

Wish I had! That Proclamation emancipated everybody but me!

LUCY

They couldn't get Scott to go free, you know.

LOPER

Why wouldn't you go free, Scott?

SCOTT

Ain't sayin' I didn't want to go. Jest I was too busy with this little white nuisance here. I couldn't take time off to get 'mancipated. 'Member what a jubilation it was? Dey didn't know deirselves what dey was jubilatin' about! Them days everybody knew jest where dey belonged. Now it's hard to figger out who's what.

GAVIN

Go get my things ready for tomorrow. I'm goin' in to the bank again.

SCOTT

Dey'll be ready.

GAVIN

I'm negotiatin' a loan.

LUCY

Why, Gay!

(ANTOINETTE, PETER *and* MARTHA *appear on the gallery.*)

GAVIN

Mosquitoes gettin' too much for you?

ANTOINETTE

It's Mama and them! Hello, Yancy!

(MARTHA *and* LOPER *see each other and are embarrassed.*)

LUCY

Martha, come here and sit next to me. You, too, darling.

(MARTHA *and* ANTOINETTE *sit beside* LUCY *on the sofa.*)

MARTHA

It's nice in here.

LOPER

(*To* PETER)

Not only a successful poetry publisher, but successful with the ladies, too, huh?

PETER

Thanks, Yancy.

LOPER

That little magazine of yours come out a year ago last January, didn't it? Now let's see—if you play your cards right, a year from next winter we'll have the February issue. Eh, Shakespeare?

LUCY

Yancy!

PETER

Shakespeare! You have a high opinion of me.

LOPER

Well, what's your opinion of me?

PETER

Hm . . .

GAVIN

You can tell that I'm from Dixie
'Cause I like my food and drink.
You know damn well that I'm from Dixie
'Cause I don't know what I think!

(*Everyone laughs.*)

PETER

That was for the dinner table. I know what I think about Yancy, Mister Gay. Yancy, you are a poor man who has become surely and suddenly a rich man. You're a definite part of the metabolism of nature.

LOPER

(*Chidingly*)

Ah, ah, ah, ah, ah!

PETER

Just as there is a use for the beast who wolfs down every-

thing that gets in his way, in our society there must be a use for you!

LUCY

Why, Peter Whitfield! Remember how you used to preach to little Lee about pride? And here you are, acting just as proud as a peacock!

PETER

This isn't pride—it's pique! We lost a war before I was born and it still hurts our pride! Yancy's proud that he's not Scott, and Scott's proud that he's not Yancy, and Mister Gay's proud that he's not either one of them. Pride's ridiculous. Isn't that right, Mister Gay?

LUCY

He agrees with you, Peety. He's just digestin' what you said.

GAVIN

That's right! And Scott's proud because he's not me, if that's any help to you.

LUCY

Peety, we're slipping backward, aren't we?

PETER

We're changing, like some lazy, prehistoric animal shedding its old skin. The only trouble is, there's no new one grown yet, and we don't even know what kind we need. And if anybody asks questions, that's treason. I could be tarred and feathered for just what I'm saying now. We've created nothing. Nobody paints anything but china. The Negroes do our singing. It's all right for a man to breed dogs, but he better not play the piano or he might be called a sissy, which means among other things a hermaphrodite. And you know we're lazy. We've stuffed ourselves with delicious food prepared by strong, black

hands, and it's made us sleepy. And *who* wants to listen to all this? That little magazine of mine was fifty cents, and I reduced it to a quarter, but if anybody would have bought it I would have sold it for a penny. It wasn't any good because—you're right, Mister Gay—I don't know what I think. I hardly ever saw my father or my mother. We were all brought up in the kitchen, weren't we? How's this for the dinner table?

(*Quoting*)

Lucky little Southern chillun
Have *two* mothers, white and black.
While Mummy's in the parlor
They're with Mammy in the back!

I had one. Her name was Amy Lane. She weaned me at the kitchen table, picked me up when I fell down, slapped me when I was bad. I didn't even know she was black. I thought her skin was made out of purple velvet, and there was a place between her shoulder and her arm that was soft and warm and aromatic, and I could sleep there better than anywhere. Then they stopped me from eating in the kitchen. I don't know what's right or wrong—or good or bad. Do you?

(*There is a silence, then* HENRY ARTHUR *is heard offstage playing "Juanita" on his guitar and singing softly.*)

LUCY

(*Lost in thought*)

That's Henry Arthur Henry, isn't it?

ANTOINETTE

(*Also lost in thought*)

That's right, Mama.

GAVIN

Ladies and gentlemen, the sun's gone down.

LOPER

That's right.

(*Suddenly the sky lights up with a flash.*)

LUCY

What was that flash?

LOPER

Oh . . . heat lightning.

GAVIN

Maybe a bird hit a telegraph wire and broke it . . . fffst!

LUCY

(*Shuddering*)

It gave me the creeps. You know what, everybody? Why don't we all go in our nice, big parlor and light the lamps? (*She looks at* ANTOINETTE) Darling, you've got tears in your eyes! What's the matter?

ANTOINETTE

Nothing, Mama . . . nothing.

LUCY

(*Starting out*)

You're awful smart, aren't you, Peety? (*Smiling gently at him*) You're stayin' for supper, Yancy?

LOPER

Delighted.

LUCY

Oh, Martha, Yancy and I've been talking and . . .

MARTHA

I'll see about supper, Cousin Lucy.

(*She goes out.*)

LUCY

Let's go in, everybody.

(*They all start out.*)

LOPER

Now don't forget, folks—September the twenty-second is not far away!

LUCY

Oh, not now, Yancy—it's supper time.

(*Everyone has gone but* PETER *and* ANTOINETTE.)

ANTOINETTE

What happened to Cousin Martha? She's left us alone.

PETER

She's afraid I'll take advantage of you, Antoinette.

ANTOINETTE

She's still hoping I'll marry a fine, rich man so this place will stay in the family, but I don't care whether it stays in the family or not any more.

PETER

What's that?

ANTOINETTE

You've made me feel that way, Peety. I've gotten to be almost afraid of this place.

PETER

Some morning you're going to get up and you're going to

walk along under the shadows of those vines until you step out into the sunshine, and you're going to keep on walking.

ANTOINETTE

Will you be walkin' with me, Peety?

PETER

No.

ANTOINETTE

Why not?

PETER

Because you're Miss Lucy's daughter and she wouldn't want me to.

ANTOINETTE

Are you afraid of Mama?

PETER

No.

ANTOINETTE

Has she got you . . . voodooed?

PETER

What are you talkin' about?

ANTOINETTE

Come on down to the river. It's nice down there.

LUCY

(*Calling from offstage*)

Peety! Come on in here and be sociable!

PETER

Miss Lucy wants us in the parlor. Come on. (*He starts out but turns back*) Come on.

(ANTOINETTE *does not move. He turns and runs out.* ANTOINETTE *is left alone. She raises her hands to her head in frustration and anger.*)

Curtain

Scene II

Autumn.

During the scene change the orchestra plays a Lancer's Piff-Paff-Pouf. When the curtain opens it is the children's parlor again. All the windows are open onto the gallery; the big chandelier is lighted; Japanese lanterns are hung along the gallery.

JACQUES *and* DOLLY MAY *are dancing center stage.* CASSIE *is looking off toward the hallway and off through those windows onto the gallery where we can see couples dancing the Lancer's. Punch cups are placed on the ottoman and side table which* JACQUES *temporarily put aside. Two little children are sitting in two of the little children's chairs by the big sofa.* HENRY ARTHUR HENRY *is arranging some chairs on the left side of the stage, and he and another servant are moving a table over to the side.*

Offstage, BOWMAN WITHERSPOON *is heard calling the dances.* CASSIE *repeats these calls to* JACQUES *and* DOLLY MAY, *much to the delight of the children.*

SCOTT *is seen crossing the stage with a tray and a bottle of whiskey. The Negro girl,* LITTLE MISS LUCY, *is dressed in an apron and a chef's cap and is carrying a large cocoanut cake which she tries to serve to the children.*

WITHERSPOON'S VOICE

Ladies and opposite gentlemen, forward and back!

CASSIE

(*To* JACQUES *and* DOLLY MAY)

Forward and back!

JACQUES

(*As he dances*)

Forward and back!

WITHERSPOON'S VOICE

Forward and turn!

CASSIE

Forward and turn!

JACQUES

Forward and turn!

SCOTT

(*To* JACQUES *and* DOLLY MAY *as he enters*)

They gonna be wantin' more punch after this dance!

JACQUES

I'm gonna want some more myself!

WITHERSPOON'S VOICE

Couples cross over!

CASSIE

Couples cross over!

JACQUES

Couples is crossin' over!

WITHERSPOON'S VOICE

Balance to corners!

CASSIE

Balance to corners!

JACQUES

Balance to corners! (*The dance ends. There is applause and laughter offstage.* DOLLY MAY *and* JACQUES *stop dancing, the children applaud and* DOLLY MAY *and* JACQUES *take big bows.* JACQUES *turns to* SCOTT) What's the matter, Grandpap?

SCOTT

In de old days we had General Lafayette and de Crown Prince o' Naples at our parties. Now it's the livery-stable man and de postmaster—and even dey isn't anxious to come.

CASSIE

Will you be quiet? These is the postmaster's children!

SCOTT

What they doin' in here?

CASSIE

They're waitin' to see Froggie and Miss Mouse, and they ain't goin' home 'til they sees 'em. (*She turns to the children*) Go on home! (*They remain. She turns to* SCOTT) See?

NEGRO GIRL

Maybe they won't ever go home!

CASSIE

Go and pass that cocoanut cake!

(*The* LITTLE GIRL *goes out.* MARTHA *enters.*)

MARTHA

Hasn't Mister Gay come back from the auction?

JACQUES

If you ask me, Miss Martha, the auction's over and Mister Gay's afraid to come back.

(MARTHA *gives him a look.*)

MARTHA

Henry Arthur Henry, will you pass the cigars?

HENRY ARTHUR

I'm not very reliable.

(*He exits.* JACQUES *is laughing.*)

MARTHA

What are you laughing at?

JACQUES

I was just thinkin' if Miss Lucy loses this place she'll *have* to go back to Paris.

MARTHA

Jacques, Mister Andree has the power of attorney from his aunt to buy the place, no matter how much it costs. He even has a cash deposit—and we got him off in plenty of time. So I'm afraid you're not going to get your wish.

JACQUES

Yes'm, I'm sorry.

MARTHA

(*She turns to the children*)

I'll get Miss Lucy.

(*She starts out as* PETER *enters.*)

PETER

Well, if it isn't the future Mrs. Yancy Loper, all dressed up and ready for the weddin'.

MARTHA

I don't see how you can joke about Mister Loper, Peety. You only admire work—he actually does it.

(*She exits.* PETER *crosses to* SCOTT.)

PETER

Mister Gay back yet?

SCOTT

Not yet. He wearin' his lightweight linen suit again. He gonna catch his death o' dampness.

WITHERSPOON

(*As he enters*)

Dancin's a problem with high blood pressure. But if you fall in with the pack, bark or don't bark but at least keep your tail a-waggin'. That postmaster's wife can wag a healthy tail, I'm tellin' you.

(*The* LITTLE NEGRO GIRL *enters, carrying the cake.*)

LITTLE GIRL

Cocoanut cake?

WITHERSPOON

No cocoanut cake, thank you.

LITTLE GIRL

(*To* PETER)

Cocoanut cake?

(PETER *shakes his head and she goes out.*)

WITHERSPOON

They're a nice enough bunch of people but they're wearin' me out.

(MARTHA *enters, followed by* LUCY *and* ANTOINETTE.)

MARTHA

(*To the children as she goes to the little piano*)

Here we are.

(SCOTT *gets the two stuffed animals from the shelf.*)

WITHERSPOON

Lucy, your plantation is saved and we're celebrating the fact, aren't we? Where is your party face?

LUCY

I'm terrified that something's gone wrong. Poor Gay—he worked so hard at the University of Virginia, and what did he learn? To conjugate Greek verbs! (SCOTT *hands her the dolls*) All right, Martha—oompa, oompa. (MARTHA *starts playing*) Sorry to have kept you waitin' all this time. That's the orchestra. I would like to present Froggie and Miss Mouse. I met them a long, long time ago—and now I'd like to introduce them to you. (*She sings*)

FROGGIE WENT A-COURTIN' HE DID RIDE. UM-HM.
SWORD AND A PISTOL BY HIS SIDE.
ASKED MISS MOUSE IF SHE'D BE HIS BRIDE. UM-HM.

(*She puts the two dolls together and makes a kissing sound.* MARTHA *plays a bit of The Wedding March*)

Now they're walkin' down the aisle. (*She makes the two dolls bow in front of the children*) I now pronounce you Frog and wife. (*She puts the frog down on a chair*) He's the man, so he gets a chance to rest. (ANTOINETTE *brings the little boy to stand in front of* LUCY) What's your name, Honey?

ANTOINETTE

Frankie!

LUCY

(*Looking around*)

Frankie! Frankie . . . Frankie . . . Frankie . . .

THE FIRST GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE FRANKIE. UM-HM.

(*Still looking around the room*)

THE FIRST GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE FRANKIE.

(*She has spied a red bandanna in* WITHERSPOON'S *hip pocket and quickly takes it at the next line*)

AND HIS WEDDIN' GIFT WAS A BIG RED HANKIE. UM-HM.

(*She hands the bandanna to the little boy, then makes the mouse take it from him. She makes the mouse blow its nose*)

K'choo! Oh, my, just in time!

(*She puts the bandanna on the chair by the frog.* ANTOINETTE *brings a little girl to stand in front of* LUCY. LUCY *looks at* ANTOINETTE *as if to ask the child's name.*)

ANTOINETTE

Gracie.

LUCY

THE NEXT GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE GRACIE. UM-HM.

(*She looks around for a prop*)

THE NEXT GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE GRACIE.

(*She looks around, still with no idea. She continues the song, stalling for time*)

—eeeeeeee . . .

(*She sees* ANTOINETTE'S *fan*)

AND HER GIFT WAS A FAN ALL FRILLY AND LACY. UM-HM.

(*She hands the fan to the little girl, has the mouse take it from her and fan itself*)

It's very hot tonight.

(*At this point,* DOLLY MAY *and* JACQUES *can be heard talking excitedly as they come in from the gallery*)

What is it, Dolly May?

DOLLY MAY

There was a man in the kitchen now said the plantation was sold today!

LUCY

Sold? To whom?

JACQUES

Just some old black tramp blabbin' away. He done left, Miss Lucy. Come on, Dolly May!

(*They exit.* LUCY *looks around the room, confused.*)

LITTLE NEGRO GIRL

Can I be a weddin' guest?

LUCY

Of course you're a weddin' guest . . .

THE NEXT GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE MISS LUCY. UM-HM.

THE NEXT GUEST TO COME WAS LITTLE MISS LUCY.

(*She takes the cake from the girl and hands it back to her*)

WITH A COCOANUT CAKE ALL FLUFFY AND JUICY. UM-HM.

Now that's all, children. The weddin's over and they're startin' on their honeymoon. Come and see us again some time— (*As the children go out with* CASSIE) —if we're still here. (*She turns to the other guests*) Go on out on the lawn and have your supper, everybody. It's just a rumor. It's not founded yet.

(*The* GUESTS *laugh and exit.* MARTHA *takes the toys and puts them on the shelf.*)

PETER

Don't be upset, Miss Lucy. Maybe the auction's been postponed.

LUCY

I only wish I could believe that. Gay's never even seen an auction. All those people shouting, raising fingers to make bids—oh, good Lord!

PETER

What's the matter, Miss Lucy?

LUCY

Gay's always been taught that it's rude to point! (*She laughs hysterically*) Now I'm just getting silly.

PETER

Where's Antoinette?

MARTHA

She's having supper with a young man whose father owns a lot of livery stables, so don't interrupt her.

PETER

Maybe I should. Maybe he'd give me a job.

(JACQUES *enters left, laughing.*)

JACQUES

Henry Arthur Henry just sat on a box of cigars! Sqush!

(*He exits.*)

MARTHA

Those cigars cost five dollars!

(*She rushes out.*)

LUCY

What's the matter with you two?

PETER

She's been nagging at me and Antoinette all summer.

LUCY

You're in love with Antoinette, aren't you?

PETER

Miss Lucy, I assure you my relationship with Antoinette is somewhat higher than ordinary love.

LUCY

Are you criticizing me, Peety? Have I become ordinary? Is that what you mean?

PETER

Miss Lucy.

LUCY

Oh, I'm talking in a nightmare. The idea of losing this place is so unreal . . .

PETER

It is not unreal, Miss Lucy. The great plantation life is gone—the path's grown over. Miss Lucy, for once in your life can't you look the truth straight in the eye?

LUCY

What truth? You look ahead without fear, but you're young and nothing really terrifying has ever happened to you, so you're not expecting it again around every corner. This house ties me with life. I knew it was waiting here—that's what kept me alive through those draining years. The roots of these trees are my roots. If they have to be sold, sell me with them. Peety, have pity on me!

PETER

I sympathize with you. I do.

LUCY

Oh, you ought to say that differently—differently. (*She takes out her handkerchief and a cablegram falls to the floor*) I feel so terribly weak today. Peety . . . you think I'm against you, don't you? But I'd let you marry Antoinette if you could just

get settled and get that little magazine of yours right so people would buy it—trim it around the edges a little.

PETER

(*Laughing*)

Trim it around the edges!

LUCY

(*Touching his hair*)

Now, you go comb your hair. You're too good-lookin' to be writin' free verse. You watch out or you'll get all fuzzy lookin' like that old Walt Whitman. Don't get dazzled by everything new that comes along.

PETER

New? Miss Lucy, the first free verse was written by St. Francis of Assisi in the year twelve hundred and . . .

LUCY

Well, you don't want to be like him, do you? Spend your life feedin' birds? You ride horseback too well. (PETER *smiles at her*) I can see why Antoinette . . . (*She suddenly pulls away and looks down at the cablegram*) Pick that up for me, will you? (*He picks it up. She turns away and cries*) Oh, I wish to God there were somebody around here that I could talk . . .

PETER

Shall I throw this away for you, Miss Lucy?

LUCY

Give it to me! Give it to me! I get one every day now. Oh, I ought to go to Paris for a few weeks. (PETER *stiffens. She notices it*) Well, what do you want me to do? Who'll give him his medicine at night?

PETER

Miss Lucy!

LUCY

Do I shock you?

PETER

Yes, you do!

LUCY

No matter how you talk, you're just another Southern gentleman—a dress suit stuffed with courtesy. Well, I've got to say it! I love him, Peety—that's obvious, isn't it? I love him, I love him, I love him, I love him, I love him! He's a stone hanging around my neck and pulling me down to the bottom, but I am in love with this stone and I cannot live without this stone. If you're thinking something mean, don't even speak!

PETER

Excuse me for being frank, but he's lived on women all his life!

LUCY

No, no, no, no, no! Don't say things like that!

PETER

He's treated you like Uncle Virgil treats chickens in the backyard—he's picked you clean!

LUCY

Pity the Southern gentleman.
His is a sorry plight.
He has put his wife on a pedestal
So he can't go home at night!

PETER

I'm flattered you remember so well!

LUCY

Oh, you were shooting sparks in those days, Peety! I thought you were at least able to understand people who love each other. You must be drivin' my little girl crazy with your sanctified softness.

PETER

Miss Lucy, don't talk that way!

LUCY

Somewhat higher than ordinary love! You're just what our old Scott says . . . you're shiff-less!

PETER

Go on! Go on!

LUCY

A man of your age without a mistress!

PETER

Miss Lucy, don't ever say things like that! They're very unattractive, coming from you! Oh, Miss Lucy . . . (*He embraces her, but they both immediately break away*) Yes, Miss Lucy, I guess this was going to happen since I first came here. I got all tangled up in these trees and you—so tangled up I couldn't see what's happened to you. Don't go back to him, Miss Lucy. He's done this to you, and I've got to get out of this house.

(*He starts off.*)

LUCY

(*Running after him*)

Peety, wait a minute! Peety, come back here—listen to me, Peety! (*She pulls him back*) Peety, I don't know what possessed me! Forgive me, Peety. When I was a young girl I wish I'd found somebody like you. Maybe I wouldn't have turned

out to be callous and vulgar and confused, the way I was just now. I'm not going back, Peety. He *has* made me like this. He has . . . he has . . .

(*Enter* WITHERSPOON.)

WITHERSPOON

Lucy, may I have the honor of this waltz?

LUCY

Will you excuse me, Peety? Excuse me, Peety?

PETER

Of course.

(*She puts out her hand and he takes it, then she takes* WITHERSPOON'S *arm and starts out with him.*)

LUCY

Did you get enough supper, Bowman? Has everybody been enjoying themselves?

(*They are off.* PETER *follows them to the door.* ANTOINETTE *enters and crosses to* PETER, *stopping to take two glasses of punch from* JACQUES, *who is passing through the room.*)

ANTOINETTE

Want some punch, Peety? (*He takes a cup; they both drink. He is still looking off after* LUCY) Good, isn't it?

PETER

Yes. Sweet.

ANTOINETTE

What is it about Mama?

PETER

(*Turning to her*)

I don't know what you mean.

ANTOINETTE

I think it's the advantage a grown woman has over a twelve-year-old girl. I recognized your talents a long time ago, but you didn't ever see me because I was only twelve. Peety, I'm seventeen now. Of course, it's really unfair of me to do this.

PETER

What?

ANTOINETTE

Oh, attack you like this—when your spurs are dull. But you see, Peety, I'm not really part of the old Southern aristocracy, if there ever was such a thing. I'm a half-breed. I'm the daughter of a drunken lawyer. Mama decided to change the family's blood—and *look* what happened. Want to dance with me? (PETER *goes to her*) I won't put any vines around you.

PETER

Were you listening?

ANTOINETTE

I'm not very well brought up. I always listen.

PETER

(*Looking offstage*)

Look who's coming!

ANTOINETTE

(*Rushing out*)

Mama!

(PETER *follows her.*)

VOICES

Yancy Loper's back! Loper's back!

(LOPER *enters from the right.* WITHERSPOON *comes in from the left.*)

WITHERSPOON

Well, you're a sight for sore eyes! Say, you smell like you'd been drinkin' whiskey. We've been havin' a good time here, too.

(*Enter* LUCY, MARTHA, ANTOINETTE, PETER, *and guests at the party.*)

LUCY

Is that you, Yancy? What took you so long? Where's Gay?

LOPER

He'll be in directly.

LUCY

What happened? Was there an auction?

LOPER

Oh, the auction's been over since four o'clock. You see, we missed a train.

(*Enter* GAVIN. *He has a package and is wiping his face with a handkerchief.*)

LUCY

Gay, Honey—what is it? Speak, for the love of God!

GAVIN

(*Turns to* SCOTT)

Here, take these—a nougat and some pralines. It's been quite

a day. (*He crosses left*) Scott, help me to get cleaned up. I'll need some help.

(*He exits, followed by* SCOTT.)

LUCY

Yancy, is it sold?

LOPER

It's sold.

LUCY

Who bought it?

LOPER

I bought it. (*After a moment*) I'm so mixed up about this thing I don't know exactly what to say. Mister Gavin Andree had power of attorney to buy the place, but only fifteen thousand dollars in cash, and B. J. Henderson, the big millionaire, right off bids thirty. Mister Andree starts fumblin' through his papers but he don't say nothin'. I look at Henderson and bid forty. He bids forty-five. I bid fifty-five and look at Mister Andree. He's just standin' there starin' at me and in three minutes it's finished. I heard myself biddin' sixty-five thousand dollars and at that point Wisteria Plantation become my personal property. Good God Amighty! Tell me I'm drunk—tell me I'm crazy! Little Yancy, who had to run around nekkid over there 'til he was eight years old, owns the place where his pappy wasn't even allowed in the kitchen with the blacks!

(MARTHA *crosses to* LOPER, *taking the keys from her purse, and drops them on the ottoman in front of him, walks back and stands near* LUCY. *He picks up the keys, jangles them, and puts them in his pocket*)

Thank you. What's the matter with the music? Come on, everybody, and you'll see how Yancy Loper swings the axe on them wisteria trees. They're gonna go ker-plunk. We're gonna dig up all these roots, turn up this land, and plow this

plantation right off the map. Things is just gettin' started, so go on back to your music. Go on! (*He turns to* LUCY, *very emotional*) Why didn't you pay attention to me when I talked? Oh, Miss Lucy, it's done now and can't be undone.

WITHERSPOON

(*Trying to take* LOPER'S *arm*)

Let's go out to the gallery and listen to the singin'. Come on.

LOPER

(*Shaking off* WITHERSPOON)

Little poor one! (*He turns up to the window*) What's the matter, everybody? Let's hear some music! Things is gonna be the way I want 'em from now on. Massa Tom Turkeyneck has just took over this plantation, so let's have some more music.

LUCY

(*Rising from her chair and calling offstage*)

Did you hear what Mister Loper said? There's a party goin' on and we'd like some music. It's the same party . . . we've just changed hosts in midstream, that's all. What music would you like, Mister Loper? (*He just looks at her. She calls offstage*) Whatever you were playing! (*The music starts*) Martha! Mister Loper would like to dance with you.

(LUCY *leads* MARTHA *to* LOPER, *who starts to dance with her.* LUCY *looks around and sees* PETER *bow to* ANTOINETTE *and start waltzing with her.* MARTHA *and* LOPER, PETER *and* ANTOINETTE, *dance off onto the gallery.* LUCY *is alone.* GAVIN *enters from left and comes to her.*)

GAVIN

Lucy . . .

(*She turns to him. He holds out his arms and they begin to waltz.*)

LUCY

Oh, Gay, what's going to happen to us now. We can't just keep on dancin' . . . can we?

(*As they waltz, the noises of the party grow in volume.* LUCY *buries her head in* GAVIN'S *shoulder.*)

Curtain

ACT THREE

ACT THREE

Winter.

The curtains have been taken down from the windows. The paintings and shelf of toys have been removed from the walls, leaving marks where the wallpaper is still unfaded. Very little of the furniture remains in place. The sofa is in the room, and a few chairs stacked together. There is a sense of emptiness. Suitcases, bundles, boxes, baskets, are piled up out in the hall and on the gallery.

JACQUES *stands in the room holding a tray on which there are champagne glasses.* LOPER *is filling them. They are looking offstage, where Negro voices can be heard singing.* HENRY ARTHUR HENRY *is in the hall, awkwardly trying to tie up a box. Then, offstage, as the song ends, we hear* LUCY *and* GAVIN *speak.*

GAVIN'S VOICE

Thank you, my dear friends, thank you.

LUCY

It was beautiful!

JACQUES

They's all come in to say good-bye. You know, these cotton pickers and cane cutters is nice enough. They just don't know nothin'.

(LUCY *and* GAVIN *have come down the outside stairs on the gallery. They come into the room and walk across it.* LUCY *is pale and her face trembles. She is scarcely able to speak.* GAVIN *follows her.*)

GAVIN

Why did you throw them your purse, Lucy? And your earrings!

LUCY

I just couldn't help it.

(*They cross the stage, paying no attention to* LOPER, *exiting.*)

LOPER

Wait a minute! Ain't you goin' to join me in a little glass of champagne to say good-bye? I brought it in from town! (*He follows them to door and calls offstage*) Don't you want any champagne? (*There is no answer. He seems offended*) Well, I don't want any either. (JACQUES *puts the tray down on a trunk*) You drink it. (JACQUES *immediately picks up a glass.*)

JACQUES

Good luck to the ones who are leavin' and Lord help the ones who are stayin' behind. (*He drinks, then makes a face*) This is not vintage champagne.

LOPER

Cost plenty. (*He looks around the room*) It's chilly in here.

JACQUES

Nobody's built any fires today.

(*He laughs, then sings*)

Sur le pont, d'Avignon
Honey dances, honey dances.

(*He laughs again.*)

LOPER

What are you laughin' about?

JACQUES

About goin' to Paris.

LOPER

Miss Lucy's goin' to live in New Orleans.

JACQUES

She'll change her mind.

LOPER

I thought she was unhappy in Paris.

JACQUES

That ain't gonna keep her from goin' back. And if she goes, Frère Jacques goes, too.

(*He dances off, singing*)

Sur le pont, d'Avignon
Honey dances, honey dances.

LOPER

(*Looking at his watch*)

Folks, ought to start for the station pretty soon. Get all your things together.

PETER

(*Entering and looking around*)

Where the dickens are Mister Gay's overshoes? Everybody's lookin' for them but with Scott gone nobody can find them. (*Calling offstage*) Martha, Mister Gay's rubbers aren't in here. I can't find them!

MARTHA

(*Offstage*)

Well, keep lookin'.

LOPER

I'll be ridin' down to the station with you.

PETER

I'm afraid there won't be room in the surrey.

LOPER

I'll ride alongside you on my horse. I'm gonna live in Baton Rouge this winter. Thinkin' of goin' into politics.

PETER

Politics! You're gettin' bigger every day!

LOPER

They held a little election down in my parish—and by golly, all the river rats come out of their holes and voted for me! Even got some of the plantation owners. There's a little turkey-neck in everybody. (*Looks at* PETER) Glass of champagne?

PETER

I won't if you don't mind.

LOPER

(*Echoing*)

I won't if you don't mind.

PETER

Why did you come here today, Yancy? Do you just enjoy seeing people suffer?

LOPER

I'm here to see that the house gets closed up tight—'til spring, when it gets tore down. What are you doin' around here?

PETER

I'm goin' to New Orleans with Antoinette and Miss Lucy and help them get a place to live.

LOPER

What are they gonna live on?

PETER

They've still got the cash deposit their aunt sent them to buy the plantation. If they don't spend too much, it'll last them quite a while.

LOPER

What are you gonna live on? Them?

PETER

I'm going to get a job—diggin' ditches if necessary.

LOPER

Want me to let you have a little money?

PETER

No, thanks very much.

LOPER

(*Echoing*)

No, thanks very much.

PETER

Where the dickens are Mister Gay's overshoes?

(ANTOINETTE *enters through window, from gallery, very angry.*)

ANTOINETTE

Mister Loper, there are a lot of men standin' out there with axes. They say they're truck farmers and they want to get started clearing out the park. Do you hate my Mama enough to do a thing like that to her?

LOPER

Why, of course not! I'll take care of it. (*He goes out*) Hey!

Wait a minute, you turkeynecks! Those axes ain't itchin', is they? Hello, Ed!

PETER

Where have you been?

ANTOINETTE

To the mailbox. I've got something for you.

PETER

For me?

ANTOINETTE

What would you rather have than anything else in the whole world?

PETER

A job . . . because then I could ask for something else.

ANTOINETTE

I think you'd rather have this. (*She waves a piece of paper*) It's a check for fifteen dollars from the *Times-Picayune* in New Orleans. I asked you for your jingles so I could learn them, but I really wanted to send them in to a newspaper. They bought three of them. Look!

PETER

(*Grabbing the check*)

Good land o' Canaan! Payable to Peter Whitfield! (*He wipes his face with his handkerchief, then the check and his palms*) When did you think of doing a thing like this?

ANTOINETTE

You were paddlin' the boat and I was reading William Blake's poetry to you. You suddenly said he was expressing what had been the matter with you all your life . . . doubting

everything. You even doubted that your dinner-table jingles were any good. And I suddenly doubted that you were actually there in front of me. And there we were—both sittin' in the boat, riddled with doubt—us, not the boat—so I read the poem again. It said:

He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe. Do what you please.

So I decided to send in your jingles to the *Times-Picayune!* (PETER *puts the check in his pocket, puts his arms around* ANTOINETTE, *and kisses her*) What was that for?

PETER

For the first of those three little jingles. I got two more coming. (*He kisses her again.*)

ANTOINETTE

Two more? They want as many more as you'll write—as long as they're funny. But, Peety, you can be awful serious when you're funny. As a matter of fact, that's when you're funniest. (PETER *laughs.* ANTOINETTE *picks up the letter on the trunk*) Oh! And they'll also give you a job as night watchman!

PETER

(*Taking letter, excited*)

Night watchman?

(*He reads the letter.*)

(*Reciting*)

He who doubts from what he sees
Will ne'er believe. Do what you please.

(*He puts the letter in his pocket*)

If the sun and moon should doubt
They'd immediately go out.

Sit down. (*She sits*)

(*He kneels*)

Antoinette, you make me feel awfully young. Am I too young for you to marry me?

ANTOINETTE

All the men down here seem like . . . well, it's a country of little boys, and you're the oldest one I've been able to find. I'll marry you—

(PETER *rises*)

—if Mama doesn't mind.

PETER

Let's go ask her. Are you afraid she'll say no?

ANTOINETTE

Peety, she's planning to live with us and take care of me. Let's don't ask her today.

(JACQUES *is heard from gallery, whistling "Sur le pont." He enters carrying a paper hatbox.*)

JACQUES

Excuse me.

(*He puts the hatbox by the fireplace.*)

ANTOINETTE

Oh, Jacques, has Scott been sent to the hospital?

JACQUES

Old Scott? Yes'm. Me and Mister Gay drove him over in the surrey this mornin'.

HENRY ARTHUR

(*Entering with heavy valise*)

I'm afraid old Scott is unrepairable on this occasion. He probably does not realize how fortunate he is. (*He drops suit-*

case on hatbox, crushing it) I might have known that was gonna happen.

(*He exits.* JACQUES *rushes to hatbox and opens it, pulls out one of* LUCY'S *French hats, holds it up.*)

JACQUES

That looks better than it did before.

(*He puts it back in the box.*)

ANTOINETTE

Come on, Peety, let's help Martha.

(*She exits.*)

PETER

(*As he is going out*)

Oh, Jacques, I forgot—your mother's come to say good-bye.

(DOLLY MAY *enters, carrying a hatbox. She goes to* JACQUES *and puts it in front of him, walks away and turns to look at him*)

She's in the kitchen.

(*He exits.*)

JACQUES

Zut! They're gonna drive me crazy!

DOLLY MAY

Why don't you just look at me once? You're leavin' me!

(*She throws herself into his arms.*)

JACQUES

Now don't start that, my little cabbage. This has all been talked out before. Excuse me, I gotta help Mister Yancy get rid of this stuff. (*He picks up a glass of champagne, drinks it*) Miss Lucy won't be able to stay in New Orleans very long, listenin' to those boat whistles in the harbor. (*He makes a noise*

with his voice, imitating a boat's whistle and an engine disappearing into the distance) Whooo-whooo—oomph-pa-cha, oomph-pa-cha, oomph-pa-cha. "Jacques, pack my bags! Allons, enfant!" Oh, man! It's not my style around here. (*He drinks another glass*) Paris is in my bones! I got a lot of unexplored territory ahead of me over there. (*He drinks another glass*) If I ever come back here, it'll be as a tourist! (*He is about to drink another glass when he hears someone coming. He turns to* DOLLY MAY) Dolly May, would you like to help Mister Yancy with the rest of this champagne?

DOLLY MAY

Thank you, Jacques.

JACQUES

(*Handing her the glass*)

I think you better go outside to drink it. Somebody's comin'.

(*She exits docilely with glass.* JACQUES *walks to the other side of the stage, eyeing the hallway. He puts his hands in his pockets and looks off, making the sound of the boat whistle*)

Whooo-whooo . . . (*Enter* LUCY) Can I do something for you, Miss Lucy?

LUCY

Yes. Take my things out to the surrey, Jacques.

JACQUES

Yes, ma'am. (*He starts off, then turns*) You ain't really goin' to live in New Orleans, is you, Miss Lucy?

LUCY

Of course I am. Why?

JACQUES

I was just wonderin'. I'll take care of your things.

(*He exits, singing*)

Sur le pont, d'Avignon
Honey dances, honey dances . . .

(LUCY *looks after him a moment, then goes to the piano and sits. Enter* GAVIN, *who crosses to* LUCY.)

GAVIN

Lucy . . .

LUCY

(*Looks up and smiles*)

Gay, I'm sorry about Scott.

GAVIN

Yes, but he's very old, you know, Lucy, and he shouldn't get as angry as he does, at his age. When I accepted the position as vice-president of the bank against his wishes, he lost control of himself. What's wrong with working in a bank? In some ways, Scott is very old-fashioned. (*He turns and smiles at her*) You're lookin' mighty pretty for a homeless waif, Lucy.

LUCY

Thank you, Gay.

GAVIN

Are you going back to Paris, Lucy?

LUCY

No. I'm not going to do anything to disgrace the family again, Gay.

GAVIN

You can't disgrace the family, Lucy. When this house goes, the family will have no more importance.

LUCY

No. He tells me he's dying. But that might go on for years. I've got to stay down here, Gay, and take care of Antoinette. I've neglected her so long. And when Aunt Catherine's money runs out and I'm really poor . . . Well, I might be able to sell my tatting like that old lady down the river—with the squinty eyes.

GAVIN

Old Mizz Jenkins.

LUCY

Old Mizz Jenkins. Of course, I'd have to learn to tat better. Or I could write a cook book—Cassie could help me.

GAVIN

Can I come to see you on bank holidays?

LUCY

Of course. We could have picnics—the three of us. Antoinette would like that—wouldn't she?

GAVIN

Of course. You're not just stayin' down here because of me, are you, Lucy?

LUCY

Oh, no, Gay. I've got to stay. You're all right. You're an important man now.

GAVIN

(*Throwing his dice*)

I'm just a bank official . . . financier . . .

(*Enter* ANTOINETTE *and* CASSIE.)

ANTOINETTE

Here they are.

CASSIE

I'm goin' over to the Brewsters' place to see can I nurse their new little baby.

GAVIN

Good-bye, Cassie.

CASSIE

Mister Gay, don't let them cashiers get you mixed up. (GAVIN *turns and looks at* LUCY) Oh, and if you get in any kind of trouble, I got a little nephew mighty good at arithmetic.

GAVIN

Thank you, Cassie.

CASSIE

(*Turning to* ANTOINETTE)

Baby, if you ever get yourself married and get yourself a child, remember this—whether you got a cent, that little infant is mine. (*She hugs* ANTOINETTE, *turns to* LUCY) Miss Lucy, take care of my baby, will you? (To ANTOINETTE) And, honey, don't let Miss Lucy go crazy and run away from you. (*She starts off, turns*) Oh, I sho' hope you all can take care of yourselves. (*She exits.*)

ANTOINETTE

Mama, don't listen to Cassie. Mama, why don't you take a little trip somewhere before we settle down? It won't cost much. You know, you can go to Europe and back, cabin class, for . . . oh, two hundred or three hundred dollars.

LUCY

Darling, don't you want me to stay with you?

ANTOINETTE

Of course I do, Mama.

LUCY

You scared me.

(*Enter* WITHERSPOON.)

WITHERSPOON

Good land o' Canaan! Give me a chance to get my breath! Listen, everybody, I just—give me some water! I gotta have a glass of water, quick!

(JACQUES *exits for water.*)

GAVIN

I think I'll just step out of the room before I lend him something that I haven't got.

(*He exits as* LOPER *enters from the gallery.*)

WITHERSPOON

I haven't seen you for a long time, Lucy. My goodness, it's Yancy Loper! (*He hands* LOPER *some money*) Now take this, Yancy. Four hundred dollars! That leaves me owin' you eight hundred and forty dollars.

LOPER

Where did you pick this up?

WITHERSPOON

Just wait 'til I tell you! Don't know why I'm so hot! Doggondest thing! This Yankee comes down—Yankee, mind you—and looks around my land and finds some kind of oil, and it seems this oil is worth money! (*He goes to* LUCY) Here's four hundred dollars for you, my beautiful Mrs. Ransdell.

Gonna give you the rest later, too. Ahhhh . . . (*He drinks a glass of water which* JACQUES *has brought*) Thank you.

LUCY

(*Handing the money to* ANTOINETTE)

Here.

ANTOINETTE

(*Refusing it*)

No, Mama, it's yours.

LOPER

What Yankee is this?

WITHERSPOON

I leased him the mineral rights for twenty-four years, and I'm rich for the time bein'! What am I sittin' here for? Got plenty more stops to make. Why, I owe money all up and down the river. (*He starts out*) I'll drop in Thursday!

LUCY

Bowman—we won't be here Thursday.

WITHERSPOON

What's that? Oh, that's why everything's piled up like this. Well, you just never mind. And you be happy, too, 'cause God's gonna take care of you. (*He pats* LUCY's *hand*) Everything in this world has gotta come to an end—even me—and when I do I want you to think this—Bowman Witherspoon was a dog-goned old nuisance but he loved his fellow man . . . and his fellow woman, too . . . especially when she was called Lucy Andree. (*He starts out, then turns*) Ever see weather like this in December? (*He can think of nothing more to say*) Well . . . (*He goes out.*)

LOPER

(*Following him onto the gallery*)

Bowman! I want to find out some more about that oil!

WITHERSPOON

(*Offstage*)

You'll have to ask that Yankee—I don't know anything about it.

(LOPER *comes into the room again. For a moment there is silence.*)

LUCY

I am leaving here with a deep worry—Martha. She's going to be in the way, working for the Yarboroughs in that crowded little house. I catch her weepin' in corners, but she pretends she's got a cold. (*She pauses*) You know something, Yancy Loper? Everybody's always thought you and Martha were right for each other. (LOPER *nods and looks away.* LUCY *whispers to* ANTOINETTE, *who goes out onto the gallery*) Way back, whenever you bought a piece of land and it was announced in the papers, she'd cut out the articles. And you know she's a lovely person.

LOPER

Miss Martha's a fine young lady. I'd do anything for you.

LUCY

Oh, Yancy, you are a generous man. I'll call her.

LOPER

All right. We've got some champagne for the occasion. (JACQUES *enters from the gallery, but hurries off when he hears* LOPER *speak*) At least we did have! (*Calling after* JACQUES) That's what I call lappin' it up!

LUCY

(*Calling off*)

Martha, whatever you're doing—well, stop it! And come right in here!

(*She turns and smiles at* LOPER)

I'll wait outside.

(*She goes out onto the gallery and disappears. He follows her to the door and looks off, then turns away and faces away from the door through which* MARTHA *presently enters, her face bowed. She is embarrassed and finally looks around the room at the luggage.*)

MARTHA

You know, it's funny, but I just can't seem to find where I put that . . .

(*She looks at a pile of luggage.*)

LOPER

What are you lookin' for?

MARTHA

(*Concentrating, very nervous*)

I packed it myself . . . but I just don't remember where I . . .

(*There is a pause.*)

LOPER

Where you off to, Miss . . . Martha?

MARTHA

I? Oh . . . to the Yarboroughs'. To take care of their house. (*He does not answer*) Sort of . . . housekeeper . . .

LOPER

They're about seventy miles away . . . over in St. John the Baptist Parish.

(*She nods. Another pause.*)

MARTHA

(*Moving down to another pile of luggage*)

Where could it be? I put it in the trunk, or maybe . . . (*Another pause*) Yes . . . about seventy miles away . . .

LOPER

I won't be comin' back up here. I'm leavin' Henry Arthur Henry to look around the grounds 'til they're all cleared out.

MARTHA

Um-hm.

LOPER

Last year about this time it had already begun to rain a lot, but this year there's still lots of sun. It's only about sixty in the shade.

MARTHA

I didn't realize that. (*A pause*) Anyway, our thermometer's broken.

LOPER

(*To himself*)

No!

MARTHA

What?

LOPER

(*Going to the door*)

What's that? (*Looking back over his shoulder*) Somebody must have been callin' me. I'll go out and see who . . .

(*He goes out quickly.* LUCY *enters and looks at* MARTHA, *who is slumped over by the pile of luggage.*)

LUCY

Oh, Martha! (*After a moment*) We've got to be going.

MARTHA

Yes . . . I can get to the Yarboroughs' today if I just don't miss my train.

LUCY

The Yarboroughs are nice.

MARTHA

Yes . . . the Yarboroughs are nice. (*She starts off*) I'll be waitin' in the surrey. (*At the door she turns*) Cousin Lucy . . . thank you.

(*She goes out.* LUCY *watches her off for a second, then turns as if to go out on the porch after* LOPER, *but he appears in the doorway.*)

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I couldn't do what I promised because . . .

LUCY

Why, Yancy, why?

LOPER

Well, you see, I got all stirred up—so I went outside. I saw somethin' out there I never saw before in my life. I saw them trees covered with long purple blossoms. And, Miss Lucy, they was the most beautiful things in the world.

LUCY

What are you talkin' about, Yancy? This is December. They won't have blossoms 'til April.

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I was lookin' at 'em in April, I reckon, because—they'll still be standin' there. I'm not going to cut 'em down. You can have 'em. You can have 'em forever.

LUCY

Yancy!

LOPER

And you can live in this house forever.

LUCY

But it's your house, Yancy.

LOPER

That's right. But it can be our house, Miss Lucy. Our trees. (*He looks at her pleadingly, desperate.* LUCY *looks back, seeing that he means it and that possibly it could all come true. She cannot speak*)
We'll prune 'em back like they was when you was a little girl and we'll spread white oyster shells thick along that driveway—all the way down to the river. We'll paint these old Corinthian columns white—'til they're gleamin'. This'll be one of the greatest places that ever was. I'll even make it better than it was before. (LUCY *still looks at him*) I'll make the money to do it, Miss Lucy. That's easy for me, makin' money. And with you here still, as the lady of this house, as my . . . (*He is overcome by the picture of what might happen*) Good

God Amighty, Miss Lucy, I'll own this state! Everybody will fight to get asked to dinner with us, and to meet you . . . and me. We'll have 'em all workin' for us, Miss Lucy. That's what I saw when I looked at them trees. That's why they was covered with purple flowers in December. Do you want 'em, Miss Lucy? Do you want them . . . and me? 'Cause I go with 'em, you see.

LUCY

Yancy, oh, Yancy . . . if I'm hearin' what I hear, thank you. But aren't you bein' sentimental? I'm not right for you, Yancy.

LOPER

You're the only one that's ever been right for me. That's been the trouble. I didn't know it. I didn't even know why I bought this place—but I knew just now. I bought it for you. You're what I need. And this old place needs you, too. The only chance it's got is with you in it.

LUCY

But it wouldn't be me. I'm not strong enough to do it. God knows I wish I were. I can't rise to the occasion. Believe me, Yancy, I'm not good enough for you. I can't be your lady, Yancy, much as I'd like to. I've missed *all* the right people. You were hidden across the road behind those chinaberry trees. I can't even understand where you sprung up from or how you got to be so smart—so strong! You frighten me!

LOPER

No, I don't, Miss Lucy, and if I do I'll stop bein' the way I am. If you tell me to hop I'll hop; if you tell me to lay down and roll over, I'll do that, too.

LUCY

No, Yancy—don't say things like that.

LOPER

Miss Lucy, I'm tellin' you, you can have these trees forever. Don't you want 'em?

LUCY

Yes, I do.

LOPER

Well, there's one way you can have 'em.

LUCY

That's right, Yancy. Just one way I can have them forever. Cut 'em down—cut 'em down now.

(*He looks at her. His face hardens. His back straightens. He looks at her for a long moment.*)

LOPER

I won't be ridin' to the station with you. I'll be too busy here. (*He starts to go, then turns back and speaks emotionally*) I wish you hadn't washed away that nosebleed. It would have been easier for me if you'd let it go on bleedin'. (*He strides out onto the gallery and calls to the workmen*) Come on, everybody, let's cut 'em down. Let's go, you turkeynecks. Give me one of them axes. Here, you men, give me one of them axes and follow me.

(LUCY *runs onto the gallery and looks offstage, holding onto the column for support as she hears the axes hitting the trees.*)

ANTOINETTE

(*Offstage on the gallery*)

Mama! We're all ready to go. Mama! (*She and* PETER *enter*) Where is she?

(PETER *takes* ANTOINETTE *in his arms and kisses her. Then they are conscious that* LUCY *is watching them. They look at her.*)

LUCY

Do you love her, Peety?

PETER

Yes, I do.

LUCY

Do you love him, Antoinette?

ANTOINETTE

Yes, Mama. I'm gonna marry him . . . if you don't mind.

LUCY

Of course I don't mind. I'm glad something good is happening.

PETER

Miss Lucy . . .

LUCY

Those men are all down there along the river, chopping down the trees—and laughing. What does Yancy call them—turkeynecks? Where do they come from? They're laughing at me, aren't they—and Gay? We're ridiculous people! We're jokes! We don't even know how to keep a roof over our heads. (*She looks out of the window*) They'll chop down all these trees until there's nothing left but this old house, and then they'll tear it down and burn it up—and everything will be flat for a while. Oh, I wish they had torn this house down before I was born—before I learned to love it so much. I never learned to live without it.

(*Enter* GAVIN.)

GAVIN

Lucy!

LUCY

Gay, we're not as smart as Yancy. We don't know as much as all these Negroes. Those little poor people along the bayou that we used to feel so sorry for—do you think they feel sorry for us? Do somethin' for us, Peety! Write something we can understand and ask people to have mercy on us, will you? And, Antoinette, you work out a way to live, do you hear me? Figure out what I did, and then for the love of God, do something else. And be friends with Yancy, will you? He needs friends.

PETER

He'll be all right. He's making money.

LUCY

That's his way of writing poetry, Peety. If somebody would only help Yancy, he could . . .

(*She shrugs her shoulders.* HENRY ARTHUR *appears on the gallery.*)

HENRY ARTHUR

Shall we close 'em up now?

LUCY

Yes . . . close 'em up. Close 'em up. Close 'em up . . .

ANTOINETTE

Mama, put your coat on.

LUCY

(*Putting on her coat. The sound of axes is louder*)

Listen . . . you can hear them better, can't you? Listen . . .

(JACQUES *enters, singing "Sur le Pont d'Avignon" softly.*)

JACQUES

Miss Lucy, je vous en prie. Your bags is packed. Your carriage awaits.

LUCY

Thank you, Jacques. (*She kisses* ANTOINETTE *as if for the last time, then turns away*) Merci. J'arrive.

(JACQUES *exits, singing his song.*)

ANTOINETTE

Mama!

LUCY

(*To* PETER *and* ANTOINETTE)

Go on out to the surrey, both of you. I'll be there in a minute. Go on.

PETER

Come on, Antoinette. We'll wait for them in the surrey.

(*They exit.* LUCY *turns to* GAVIN.)

LUCY

Gay!

GAVIN

I know. Go back to Paris, Lucy. That's all right.

LUCY

When I'm gone, send half the money to me, will you, and give the rest to Antoinette?

GAVIN

Of course. And I can send you a little bit off and on. I hope you know what you're doing, Lucy.

LUCY

I know. I'm going to tie that stone around my neck and go down for the last time.

GAVIN

Are you doing it because Antoinette doesn't need you any more and I . . .

LUCY

Gay . . . that's just an excuse! I'm what old Scott says . . . I'm shiff-less. I would have gone anyway. I can't help it. Oh, God, save me . . .

(*She throws herself into* GAVIN'S *arms.*)

ANTOINETTE

(*Calling from offstage*)

Mama!

PETER

(*Also calling offstage*)

Come on!

GAVIN

Come on, Lucy Andree . . . let's see how many pretty teeth you got. (*She smiles. He calls offstage*) We're coming. (*The axes are very loud now*)

(*He holds out his arm and* LUCY *takes it. They start walking off together. At the door she turns and whispers to the room.*)

LUCY

Good-bye . . . good-bye.

(*They go off.*)

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